

THE DANES AND THE ARCHBISHOP.

When Elphege was Archbishop of Canterbury, Sweyn, King of Denmark, made one of his dreadful raids on the southern coasts of England. On this occasion, to the usual love of plunder was added the stimulus of revenge, the Danes being eager to avenge the death of their countryman who had perished in the massacre of St. Brice's Day A.D. 1002, a tragedy unsurpassed in horror except by the Sicilian Vespers and the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Dean Hook, in his "Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury," gives the following account of this Danish invasion, and of the fate of Elphege:—

In 1011 the Danes appeared before Canterbury, preparing for an assault. The nobles had fled, and some there were who, before flying, had dared to counsel the minister of God to abandon his post—the shepherd to act as a hireling. They were mildly rebuked, and the good old Christian buckled on his spiritual armour. But while preparing for the worst, the Archbishop now showed a vigour of mind far greater than could have been expected from one who had hitherto exhibited only the virtues of a recluse. He exhorted the citizens; and the citizens, encouraged by his example, for twenty days successfully repelled the assaults of the enemy. Before relieving guard or repairing to the ramparts, each soldier was seen kneeling in the cathedral, where the Archbishop, at his proper post, was always present to administer to him the holy sacrament. What would have been the result of this combination of piety, discretion, and valour, if it had not been for an act of treachery, it is useless to surmise. On the twentieth day the Danes were admitted by a traitor into the city.

The traitor, whoever he was, set fire to one portion of the city, and when the alarmed garrison rushed to extinguish the flames, that part of the ramparts which they thus forsook was assailed and mounted by the enemy. The Archbishop hoped that even the pagans would reverence his person, and determined to address them. They were too busily engaged in plundering the houses of the citizens to notice his approach, and he arrived at a spot where the carnage was fearful and the cruelty beyond description.

Instead of yielding to his entreaties, the Danes seized him, and dragged him, bound as a captive, by a refinement of cruelty, to behold the conflagration of his cathedral. The Archbishop knew that the church was filled with clergy, with monks, with the defenceless of both sexes. The timbers were falling; the flames reached the roof, down which flowed streams of melted lead. The people who first came forth were butchered amidst shouts of merriment. Then, that the sport might be varied, every tenth man was spared to become a slave. Elphege himself was reserved, for the ransom of an archbishop would be more profitable than his death.

Towards evening they carried him to the north gate of the city, where a kind of market was established for the sale or the ransom of the captives. Eight hundred unhappy creatures were here assembled, the remnant of seven thousand who are said to have fallen in the sack of the city. A subdued exclamation burst from them, expressive of their sorrow, their sympathy and alarm, as the Archbishop was thrust in among them. Elphege prepared to address to them words of comfort, but a stroke from a battle-axe compelled the silence which the Danish leader enjoined. Soon after, a deputation from the officers of the enemy made their appearance, to inform the Archbishop that his ransom was fixed at three thousand pieces of silver. The people entreated him to accept the terms, as his friends would sell the church plate throughout the province, if that were needed, to raise the sum required. The Archbishop refused to enrich the pagans from the treasures which had been bequeathed to the church for the honor of religion and the relief of the poor. They bound him in chains, and carrying him with them wherever the army went, they kept him in durance for seven months.

But the end was drawing nigh. The army was at Greenwich. It was the vigil of Easter. It was known by the Danes that the Christians would

congregate in various parts of the country at that great festival, and they gave the Archbishop notice; that unless the ransom was paid within eight days his life would be forfeited. Paid it was not, and the enemy were furious in their wrath.

The Danes, meantime, had not been hoarding their money. They had just procured a large supply of wine from the south, very superior to any that could be obtained from the vineyards of England. This was preparatory to a great feast, at which they gorged themselves, as was their wont. The floor was strewn with ox bones, and they now became inebriated with their south country wine.

The Archbishop was sent for to make them sport.

"Money, bishop, money!" was the cry which resounded on all sides, as he was hurried into the hall. Breathless from fatigue, he sat down for a short time in silence. "Money, money!" was still the cry; "your ransom, bishop, your ransom."

Having now recovered his breath, the Archbishop rose with dignity, and all were attentive to hear whether a promise of money for his ransom would be made. "Silver and gold," he said, "have I none; what is mine to give I freely offer—the knowledge of the one true God. Him it is my duty to preach, and if you heed not my call to repentance, from His justice you will not escape."

Some one, more heartless than the rest, here threw an ox bone with all his force at the defenceless old man, and, amidst shouts of laughter, the cowardly example was followed. The missiles, which the floor plentifully supplied, were hurled at him, till he fell in an agony of pain, but not dead. There was standing by a Dane, whom Elphege had baptized and confirmed on the preceding day. He knew not how to assist his spiritual father, but he was moved by feelings of pity and compassion. He lifted up his battle-axe, and, as an act of Christian charity, clave in twain the skull of Elphege Archbishop of Canterbury.

When the wine of the south had done its work, and the Danish leaders had time for sober reflection, they felt remorse for their conduct, and delivered the Archbishop's body, without a ransom, to his friends for burial. The corpse was removed from Greenwich to London, where it was received as the body of a martyr, and interred with great pomp, the bishops of London and Dorchester officiating.

Ten years elapsed, and London saw another sight. The barge of a Danish king was nobly painted and adorned with golden ornaments, to receive on board the corpse of Elphege. It was preceded and surrounded by a Danish guard of honor and followed by the chief members of the Danish court. It was welcomed to their cathedral by the inhabitants of Canterbury, and deposited by the side of the illustrious Dunstan.

THE SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM OF THE CHURCH.

BY THE BISHOP OF CHICAGO.

There is among our Church people a higher appreciation of the means of grace. The popular theory that they are signs only and not means, leads naturally to their depreciation and to the charge that they who make more of them are formalists afflicted with disloyal tendencies. On the other hand, they who deny that the sacraments are means, or channels, or instruments, of grace, find themselves logically compelled to seek grace through something else of the nature of means or instrumentality; and it is not necessary to bring evidence to show that the practice of speaking about religion, by men more or less trained to perform that duty, on Sundays and other appointed days, from an enclosure or desk known as the pulpit, is the popular substitute. Multitudes of people there are who would smile at the novelty or frown at the futility of a service consisting of the Lord's Supper, or a Baptism without an exhortation. "Cui bono?" would be the question, "We have been taught to lean upon the sermon—not the sacrament. The sermon stirs us up, stimulates us, feeds us, brings something to us. We feel that God blesses us in the hearing of His

preached Word. But the sacraments containing nothing except what we put into them. They are only forms and signs of realities that are in us before we come to them, and there is nothing like a gospel sermon to make us feel as we ought to before we come."

But there is a serious fallacy underlying this view of things. Here, upon a table before us, stands an array of dishes containing healthful articles of food. Nature's kindly and bounteous God has stored them with all those varied forces of nutrition which are indispensable to the sustentation of man's physical nature. That is the Prayer-book view, and the apostolic and catholic doctrine, with regard to all the sacramental ordinances of the Church. A person who has the appetite of a penitent heart, hungering after hidden manna, comes to them to receive what they contain of spiritual nutrition and refreshment, and does receive the inward grace when he partakes the outward form. He brings nothing to the sacrament but receptivity, and what he receives is what God has put into and causes to flow through the sacrament.

The other view is that these viands are simply signs or reminders of forces of nutrition that exist elsewhere, and that these forces are chiefly found in the words of persons who are chosen to talk about food, its importance, its value, its indispensability to health. It is the great modern sacrament of talk which satisfies soul-hunger; and when a Christian is filled with the grace of that sacrament, he comes to the signs, the emblems, the empty vessels upon "God's board," and executes a sort of dumb show of participating in what he has already received from another source. It pleases him and to a certain degree profits him, as a reminder of grace previously taken and incorporated, but nothing more than this. The benefit is, however, so slight in comparison, and the excitation of pleasurable emotion so insignificant, that he begins to doubt the value of a dumb show, and concludes that he can get on very well without the imaginary nutrition of empty vessels.

The tendency of this Zwinglian error is to impeach the wisdom of our dear Lord. For what wisdom could have been displayed in establishing forms or institutions in the Church, which His own grace, administered through preaching, would train His people to depreciate and disuse?

Why should He, who came to do away with a dispensation of mere types and shadows, the figures of good things to come, mark the inauguration of a dispensation of fulfillment, by spreading His board with empty vessels—the merest simulacra of blessings elsewhere obtainable?

It is, no doubt, well that we should disclaim all intent to depreciate the office and function of the preacher. It is not disrespectful to a usurper to bid him vacate his throne and make way for his legitimate sovereign. Preaching has its place and its mission, and no Priest can reach the full measure of usefulness who fails to appreciate that fact, and perform the duty to the very best of his ability; but he is simply guilty of treason if he sacrifices the sacrament to the sermon. Nor will he be wholly loyal unless he expose the harmful error of substituting preaching as the great means of grace in place of the sacraments of Christ's own ordaining; an error which is becoming better understood among us, with the result of increased devotion to the sacramental system of the Church.

There is a thought incidental to this subject, which will appeal to those who deplore the insecurity of the pastoral relation. Permanent relations will be more readily maintained, when correct notions as to the non-sacramental character of preaching prevail. A true Priest will always preach his very best, but the faithful performance of his Priestly duties will most surely win him an abiding place in the affections of the people. As the steward of God's sacramental grace, he will not merely administer the sacraments, but he will shepherd the lambs and go out after the belated sheep, and seek to cultivate the grace sown in the hearts of all, old and young, rich and poor. It is practicable for a Clergyman to preach himself out, but he cannot Priest himself out, because the divinely ordained means of grace are foundations of perennial power and beauty.